

SENATE BILL 1400
By Herron

AN ACT to name a segment of United States Highway 412 in
Decatur County in honor of James W. Ayers.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to
name certain highways in honor of those exemplary citizens who during their lifetimes
contributed significantly to the growth and prosperity of their respective communities; and

WHEREAS, no Tennessean is more deserving of this honor than James W. Ayers of
Decatur County; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ayers is an exemplary businessman and dedicated community leader;
and

WHEREAS, a 1961 graduate of Parsons High School, Mr. Ayers learned the value of
hard work as child on his family farm and developed an entrepreneurial spirit while shining
shoes in Parsons, leading him to a degree in Business Administration from Memphis State
University; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ayers founded American Health Centers, Inc., in 1979 and transferred
ownership to its employees fifteen years later; and

WHEREAS, acquiring ownership of Farmers State Bank in Scotts Hill in 1986, Mr. Ayers
later moved the operation to Lexington, garnered First National Bank of Lexington, became sole

owner of the corporation, and changed the bank's name to FirstBank. Mr. Ayers also sits as Chairman of the Board and is a major shareholder of CommunitySouth; and

WHEREAS, A man of great concern for the welfare of his community, Mr. Ayers is involved in numerous civic, educational, and charitable organizations, including his efforts as Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Jackson State Community College Foundation, a member of the Board of Trustees of Union University, a member of the Board of Trustees of Freed-Hardeman University, and a member of the Alexis de Toqueville Society of the United Way of Middle Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, In response to his service, Mr. Ayers has been awarded the National Silver Beaver Award by the Boy Scouts of America and honorary doctorates from Freed-Hardeman University and Union University; and

WHEREAS, In appreciation of his singular legacy, this General Assembly proposes to name a portion of United States Highway 412 to commemorate James W. Ayers' bountiful life of purpose and commitment to the greater good; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the segment of United States Highway 412 from its intersection with United States Highway 641 westward to one-half (0.5) mile west of its intersection with Mt. Ararat Road in Decatur County is hereby designated as the "James W. Ayers Highway".

SECTION 2. The department of transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating such segment of United States Highway 412 as the "James W. Ayers Highway".

SECTION 3. The erection of such directional signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not

render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5.

(1) This act shall become operative only if Decatur County, Tennessee, either remits the estimated cost of the erection of such signs to the department of transportation within one (1) year of the effective date of this act or manufactures such signs in accordance with the provisions of subdivision (2). Decatur County shall make such payment prior to any expenditure by the state for the manufacture or installation of such signs. The department shall return any unused portion of the estimated cost to Decatur County within thirty (30) days of the erection of such signs. If the actual cost exceeds the estimated cost, Decatur County shall remit an amount equal to the difference in such costs to the department within thirty (30) days of receiving an itemized invoice of the actual cost from the department.

(2) Decatur County may manufacture and erect such signs provided that such signs are manufactured and erected pursuant to state and federal guidelines and approved by the department.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.